



April 12, 2023

**Testimony in Opposition to LD 862
An Act to Move Jurisdiction over Railroad Lines from the Department
of Transportation to an Independent Rail Authority**

Greetings distinguished members of the Committee on Transportation:

My name is Angela King, Advocacy Manager for the Bicycle Coalition of Maine (BCM). Our mission is to make Maine better and safer for bicycling and walking. On behalf of BCM, and aligned with the views of our more than 20,000 members and supporters, this testimony is submitted in OPPOSITION to LD 862.

Rail lines in Maine are supervised, managed and in some cases, owned by the Department of Transportation. The BCM believes that the public interest is best served if the MaineDOT continues in these roles, and that management of these assets continue to be managed by a public entity and arm of state government.

Transferring “jurisdiction” for rail lines to an “independent authority” is a policy directive that is largely opaque and therefore unsupportable. What does “jurisdiction” even mean – control over these assets, or removal of these assets from public processes such as Rail Use Advisory Councils that assess the best and highest use of these corridors? And is the independent authority a private corporation, a quasi-governmental entity like the Turnpike Authority, or something else?

In the absence of any details about what this bill is seeking to do, the BCM opposes LD 862 and recommends an Ought Not to Pass report.

Thank you for your time and service to the people of Maine.

Sincerely,

Angela King
Advocacy Manager
Bicycle Coalition of Maine